

**Written Statement of Dr. Sarah Sewall
Under Secretary-Designate for Civilian Security,
Democracy and Human Rights
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
November 7, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Corker, and the Members of this Committee. I am deeply honored to be here with you today and to be considered for the position of Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

The trust placed in me by President Obama and Secretary Kerry is humbling. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you and your colleagues to strengthen the security of the American people and nations around the world by helping countries build more democratic, secure, and stable societies and to advance human freedom.

I would like to acknowledge my husband, Thomas Conroy, a public servant himself, our three eldest daughters, Madeleine, Cashen, and Emma who are in their senior year of high school, and our youngest, Sophie. While they could not be here today, they are always with me in spirit. Their enthusiasm about the prospect of my return to government service is an enormous gift for which I am very grateful.

Having worked on Capitol Hill for Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, I have tremendous respect for the institution of Congress and for the Members of the Senate and the House who fulfill their important responsibilities. One of the greatest lessons I learned from Senator Mitchell is the importance of listening carefully to the views of those with differing ideas and perspectives. Senator Mitchell was an outstanding public servant of deep personal conviction, yet he always made time to consider carefully diverse views from both sides of the aisle. It is in that spirit of openness and respect that I appear before you today.

If confirmed, I would be eager to work with all of you and benefit from your perspectives on this Under Secretary position and how its nearly \$4 billion of programs and numerous personnel overseas and in Washington can more effectively promote good governance and protect human freedoms around the globe.

As you know, this new Under Secretariat (known within the State Department as “J”) is part of a broader transformation of U.S. foreign policy. The dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the growth of global terrorism, and the challenges

posed by weak or repressive governments have prompted changes in U.S. policy and our methods of engaging with the world. The 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review reorganized the State Department, creating a new configuration of operational bureaus and offices that combines both “soft power” and “hard power” tools to promote civilian security, democracy and human rights.

This combination of policy and programs offers a tremendous opportunity to integrate efforts across a broad spectrum of activities. For the first time, the Bureaus of Counterterrorism and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement reside in the same Under Secretariat, as do the new Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, and the Bureaus of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, and Population, Refugees and Migration, as well as the offices that work to promote international justice, engage global youth, and combat human trafficking. The Under Secretary must not only prioritize and promote synergies among these programs, but also work to strengthen effective partnerships across the U.S. government, among our global allies, and with civil society more broadly.

While our nation’s engagement with the world continues to evolve, America’s goals remain constant: it has consistently sought a stable international system that enables the free flow of commerce and ideas and protects individual freedoms. International stability and human freedom may be “global goods,” but they also promote Americans’ security and prosperity.

The hardworking professionals at the State Department have embraced this mandate. From responding to conflict in Syria through humanitarian assistance and support to the opposition, to building trust in Burma between long-warring ethnic groups, to strengthening the rule of law in Central America, State Department employees every day tackle tough challenges such as these to build a more just, safe and free world. If confirmed, I will devote myself to supporting them and all of the tremendous work that they are doing.

Much of my career has focused on protecting civilians and promoting human rights. I have worked on these issues from very different vantage points – serving in the Pentagon (where I was the first Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peace Operations), and directing Harvard’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. Perhaps more important than my involvement in policy is my interest in how the U.S. government can best realize its policy goals through actions, i.e. the *implementation* of policy. This is why, while teaching at Harvard, I worked with the U.S. military to help revamp counterinsurgency doctrine (making civilian protection the center of U.S. operations), to reduce incidents of civilian casualties

in Afghanistan (capturing best practices and proposing institutional reforms), and to create doctrine for preventing and responding to mass atrocities (now adopted by the U.S. Armed Forces). Even the best policies will falter without effective implementation, and there is always room for improvement.

Particularly in the face of tightening budgets, the United States must work to make civilian power even more efficient and creative in addressing global challenges. The J Under Secretariat can leverage the great work by organizations and individuals within civil society, the State Department, USAID, and partner organizations across the international community. The State Department must ensure that every penny of taxpayer resources is used wisely. If confirmed, I will work with you and my colleagues in the Department to use our resources strategically, while continuing to ensure that these programs deliver results for America and our partners and allies.

In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote of “a single garment of destiny” that bound the human race. His words ring ever more true in today’s interconnected, hyper-linked world. When the world is safer, Americans are safer; and when the world is more prosperous, Americans can be more prosperous. When we invest in promoting our values and preventing conflicts today, we reduce the odds that our military will be asked to sacrifice for us tomorrow. When our nation is true to its principles, standing with civil society against hatred and repression, we are all the stronger. And as Secretary Kerry has said, strengthening civilian security and good governance abroad offers an enormous return on investment – not simply in the conflicts we avoid but in the well-being of future generations of American citizens.

It would be an enormous privilege to bring the experiences and convictions I have described to the role of Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights.

I thank all Members of the Committee for your commitment to these issues, and for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to your questions. Thank you, again.